(b) Government, through diplomatic channels, have taken up the matter of their release and repatriation with Pakistan.

Extension of Tawaghat-Gunji road to facilitate Kailash Mansarovar pilgrims

†2458. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to extend Tawaghat-Gunji road, presently under construction, upto Sialekh to facilitate the travel of Kailash Mansarovar pilgrims coming from various parts of the country and abroad;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the steps Government are taking to make this path convenient on the lines of path available through China?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) and (c) Government have undertaken the construction of a road linking Ghatiabgarh and the Lipulekh Pass, which includes the section from Tawaghat to Gunji. The construction of the road has been presently held up due to environmental objections arising from its routing through the Asokote Wild Life Sanctuary. The matter is pending with the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

Power project in Bhutan

2459. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a power project is to set up in Bhutan as part of Indo-Bhutan cooperation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is going to help India in any manner; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) to (d) Hydro-power generation has been identified as one of the core areas of cooperation

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.